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Three pilot schools, two elementary and one junior high are developing a program to improve the teaching of children coming from homes of limited background. In most cases the families are recent in-migrants, white and Negro, or families who have failed in attempts at assimilation into a dynamic, industrial, urban culture.

With a minimum of additional school personnel and a minimum increase in school budget (10% more per pupil than spent in other areas of the city) the following objectives are being pursued by teachers and other school staff members: 1) to better identify each child's abilities, interests, and needs; 2) to stimulate each child to attain achievement levels commensurate with his abilities; 3) to raise each child's cultural sights by providing enrichment experiences; 4) to assist each child in making and carrying out appropriate educational and occupational plans; 5) to assist parents in providing a home atmosphere of encouragement and stimulation; 6) to give parents a better understanding of educational opportunities available to them and to their children; 7) to enlist the assistance of community agencies in supplying necessary services and expanding cultural experiences for each child; and 8) to encourage the community to accept the worthiness of higher cultural levels and the fact that each child should be educated to his optimum potential.

Such a program has required the close cooperation of school personnel, parents, community leaders, and social service agencies. The schools are improving instruction for the culturally disadvantaged child through changes in school organization, curriculum, teaching techniques, and materials. Agencies have been enthusiastic in their support of the activities of the pilot schools. Problems still to be met include teacher orientation, leadership needs, population transiency, and agency and evaluation multiplicity.

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GREAT CITIES PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A PILOT PROJECT IN THREE SCHOOLS IN AREAS WHERE PUPILS HAVE LIMITED BACKGROUNDS

1959-1960

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GREAT CITIES PROGRAM FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

A PILOT PROJECT IN THREE SCHOOLS IN AREAS WHERE PUPILS HAVE LIMITED BACKGROUNDS

PREFACE

With the opening of school in September, 1959, the Detroit Board of Education began its active participation in the second project of the Great Cities School Improvement Project. Along with 13 other large cities in the country, Detroit is making an attempt to develop a school program more properly suited to the needs and backgrounds of the children in three pilot schools -- two elementary schools and one junior high school--children who have such limited backgrounds that they have been designated as culturally deprived or environmentally handicapped. The problem is this: When we identify such a child, what can we do differently in order to give him a better education?

The pilot project has been conducted in an area which involves two elementary schools and an adjoining junior high school. While the two elementary schools are adjacent, they serve communities which differ markedly. One of these elementary schools serves one of the most transient neighborhoods of the city. Statistically it approaches a 100% turnover in its pupil population each year. This school has a majority of white children. The other elementary school, slightly larger, serves a pupil population which comes almost exclusively from the largest public housing project in Detroit. It is almost 100% Negro and the population is relatively stable. The junior high school serves these two areas plus several more with a relatively cosmopolitan population--many nationalities and several races -- representing generally a low economic and social class.

For 30 years the area served by the junior high school has been the "melting pot" of Detroit. There are islands, whole blocks of white population, which have not been absorbed, surrounded by the Negro population as it has moved northward mile after mile. Within the area are pockets of other minor ethnic groups. These schools in the pilot project enroll approximately 3500 pupils. Approximately 130 professional staff persons, teachers and administrators, have been involved in this program.

THE SOCIAL SETTING

Detroit has conditions which are typical of most large cities. In this great industrial city are the problems connected with the assimilation of great segments of humanity, mainly unskilled workers and their families, shifted, in the last few years, from a predominantly rural background to an urban environment. These people have different cultural patterns and mores, so that the city is confronted with a real and urgent problem of acculturating them. In addition, a large and

rapidly growing element of the population is but one generation removed from the in-migrant stage and only partially and inadequately assimilated into the main stream of productive citizenship.

At the same time, the unskilled labor market has been reduced. The market is decreasing further at an accelerating rate as Detroit changes to a center for research, planning, and management of automated production. This tends to require more and more skilled and semi-professional operatives. Relief rolls are high and public welfare costs are great, even during relatively prosperous times for the metropolitan area.

Children in overwhelming numbers come to the schools from the blighted, segregated, or socially disorganized areas. In general, homes and the neighborhoods lack what are usually called cultural assets, resources for the arts, recreational outlets and social organizations. There is bewilderment of both parents and children as they are confronted by the complex problems of urban life. There is a high degree of transiency both with the city and back to original rural areas -- only to return again to the city.

Many children lack interest in school and are retarded in school achievement. They have only the lowest educational and occupational objectives. In most cases they reflect the apathy and indifference of their parents concerning educational success or failure. Yet many of the pupils have ability levels which indicate that they could perform average or better-than-average in school and life achievement.

Reading material in most homes is non-existent and many parents are practically illiterate. Children in many instances lack knowledge or training in good health habits and tend to be physically aggressive. Their environment often conditions them to violence and degradation.

The parents are not against education. Many of them just do not value it very highly, or do not know how to help their children. They think their children should learn to read and to figure a little, but they are not anxious to have their children do anything fancy, or to go on to college. The parents are glad if their child does well in school, but they feel that they do not know how to help him succeed, and usually they are not greatly upset if the child does not succeed.

The lives of the parents of children with this limited background are not very stimulating. Home is often a bore, rooms almost like cells. These parents work at routine jobs which require little thinking. Their fantasy life is not very active. The rebellion against this lack of stimulation is largely confined to impulse buying and Saturday night parties.

Social service agencies, both public and private, are numerous, active, and conscientious in their activities. Their services, however, tend to be more palliative in nature than curative or preventative. On

the other hand they are both ready and willing to join forces with the schools in an all-out effort to break through the cultural barrier which heretofore has set these people apart from accepting and being accepted as significant human beings in an urban environment.

In this project the school considers its services essential as an agent to bring into a common focus all the impinging forces which can have a constructive and elevating influence upon the lives of these people who are out of adjustment with the ongoing current of modern living -- economic, social, and ethical.

THE PROJECT

In essence the project is an experimental study to determine how teaching and the school can be more effective, how teachers can utilize their abilities more fully, what constitutes an appropriate school organization, effective teaching materials, adequate staff and service personnel, and how assistance from community agencies can best complement school services to meet the needs of culturally handicapped children. As a pilot project it must be one which, if successful, can be adopted by other schools.

The program for the year during which the pilot project was developed used a multi-phase approach. This approach included (1) an intensive orientation of the staff of the school involved, (2) an extensive involvement of parents of the children concerned, (3) a purposeful focusing of the attention of public and private agency personnel and their resources on the problem, (4) the judicious use of the counsel and advice of specialists in developing and adapting curriculum, school organization, and services to the particular needs of the pupils, and (5) a nominal increase of guidance and remedial teaching service and of personnel to mobilize and coordinate community, agency, and school resources.

There is an assumption inherent in this project that the traditional pattern of school organization, staff training and methods, materials, and services are based on a standard "middle class" culture and value system which does not obtain in the lowest economic and social classes. The evidence is rather obvious that typical schooling in culturally deprived areas fail to meet the needs of the children and, in a proportionate manner, the investment of educational funds and energy is relatively ineffective, often futile, in developing self-respecting, productive and discriminating citizens.

It has been the purpose of the project to develop a practical program which will significantly improve education for children with limited backgrounds in areas where there are predominant numbers of them. In Detroit these children come from homes of recent in-migrants, and many second-generation citizens, some white and some Negro, who have not made an adequate adjustment to urban living and whose children have not responded satisfactorily to the regular school program available to them. The need for significantly more effective education for such groups

is common to all large cities. The need to develop programs which produce better educated and more productive citizens which can be financed within reasonable limits and operated with typical teachers and administrators is also common.

There are five hypotheses upon which this project is based and which it proposes to test:

1. School staffs need to be much more effective in meeting the needs of children and youth whose environment and background have not provided them with culture patterns and value systems upon which most school programs are based. School staffs, therefore, need to examine and revise their school programs and their activities as an important part of making school programs for these children more effective in developing skilled, productive and discriminating citizens.

2. Mobilization of the constructive forces of home and community, which have a bearing on the attitudes and motivations of children, is essential to reinforce the efforts of teachers in securing acceptance and adoption of better self images, higher levels of aspiration, greater scholastic achievement, more regular school attendance, and longer school careers.

3. An intensified program of group and individual conferences between teachers and parents, home visitations by teachers, field trips, and short-term evening courses for adults will produce more effective teaching and values, attitudes, and behavior patterns in parents which will result in increased concern and action for the education and welfare of their children.

4. A relatively small addition to each school staff (e.g., one coaching or remedial teacher, one school-community coordinator a part-time visiting teacher, and a part-time clerical employee) will result in much greater effectiveness and efficiency of the entire school staff in securing educational achievement, social growth, and economic literacy on the part of pupils, and in improved citizenship on the part of parents.

5. A more appropriate and effective expenditure of funds to realize the social and educational objectives of the public schools in problem areas will result from a thorough analysis and careful study of needs of children with limited backgrounds, with subsequent implementation of resulting insights applied to (a) preparation of teachers, (b) in-service education of school staffs, (c) curriculum adaptations, (d) school organizational adjustments, (e) teaching materials and methods, (f) use of community resources, (g) involvement of parents.

If such programs prove effective in doing a better job of reaching and teaching such pupils, similar programs will be developed in other schools in the city.

ORIENTATION OF STAFF

Every city has many children who come to school from families and neighborhoods which do not provide enough stimulating experiences for their young. Such children come to school without previous experiences with books, paste, paints, and so on. In most cases, these children not only have had different experiences than middle-class children, but they have also had too few experiences of any type that would stimulate the intellect. Under favorable growing conditions, man tends naturally to be curious, to explore, to attempt to understand, and to master his world. If this is true, more time must be spent finding ways to free students to become intrinsically motivated to learn, and less time worrying about the fact that children just aren't motivated as they used to be.

Thus, the key person in insuring the success of such a project would be the classroom teacher who works directly with these children. But this success would not be achieved by a staff of teachers working independently. Rather, an entire faculty would have to work as a team, sharing ideas, techniques, materials, experiences, and any other resources that might offer some hope for meeting the needs of the culturally handicapped child. In order to affect an entire school population, it was apparent that school faculties would, first, have to be completely convinced that the proposed pilot project had merit, or, at least, was worth trying. The high degree of cooperation that such a plan required was insured by including teachers in the early stages of the project's development. Interest and cooperation was sustained by having the staffs share in subsequent planning phases.

The initial orientation of the teaching staff took the form of a one-week workshop which was held during the week just prior to the opening of the school term in September. The workshop was addressed by consultants in the fields of psychology, sociology and social work. Other resource persons included representatives from all areas of the Board of Education supervisory staff, and representatives from Labor, and from many City of Detroit Commissions, as Housing, Youth, Library, Recreation, and Community Relations. In smaller group meetings teachers from the three schools developed ideas and plans which could be incorporated into their work with children. Special attention was given to developing a plan of action for the school-community coordinator, the coaching teacher, and the visiting teacher. It was recognized from the beginning that a cooperative team approach would be necessary. Particular attention was given to the necessity for developing closer working relationships with parents and for involving personnel from social agencies and civic groups which operate in the area of the three schools.

Attention was given, also, to the need for setting up evaluative procedures, which would give some index to the effectiveness of the measures which would be initiated. It was recognized at the outset that the multiphase approach created difficulties which increased the problem of evaluation.

Early in the fall, arrangements were made for several members of the staff of each school to visit the well-known community schools project in Flint, Michigan which is sponsored by the Mott Foundation. During their visit in Flint, where they were the guests of the Mott Foundation for two days, they discovered many valuable ideas and concepts pertaining to evening use of the school facilities and to the organization of a program which would involve parents and other adults, as well as children, in after-school and evening activities. The principals, assistant principals and school-community coordinators especially benefited from this workshop experience. It was felt from the beginning, however, that the pilot project in Detroit would concern itself with a closer tieup between these activities (involving parents and children) and the instructional program of the school. It became clear that the involvement of parents, and the organization of after-school and evening activities, was a means to an end rather than an end in itself. The objective in our case was making the school staff more effective in the acculturation of children, broadening and deepening their apperceptive backgrounds, giving them a better self image and greater motivation for successful achievement in school work.

Throughout the school year the teachers from each of the three schools participated in workshops and discussion groups. These periodic meetings enabled the staffs to evaluate progress, examine goals, and to exchange ideas. Guided by the admonition, "Don't be afraid to experiment", the school staffs in each of the three schools have developed programs designed specifically for their schools.

Each school was given the same additional personnel, the same availability of services, and the same encouragement to make whatever changes that had to be made. After a year, the programs now in operation at the pilot schools are as varied and as imaginative as the experience and interest of the staffs have been to make them.

THE PROGRAM IN OPERATION

The program became operational on the opening day of school. Teaching staffs had been thoroughly briefed on the prospects of what involvement in the project would mean in terms of in-service training, evaluation, use of community resources, and development of new programs, new materials, and new experiences. Although beginning steps were haltingly made, subsequent progress became increasingly sure as teachers developed confidence in their abilities to sense needed changes and to adapt to many new situations and ideas. The various aspects of the program -- difficult to separate because of the close involvement of many teachers, parents, and agencies -- can be more readily described under these broad categories: (a) Education of School Staff; (b) School Changes; (c) Involvement of Children; (d) Use of Special Personnel; (e) Involvement of Community Agencies and Personnel; (f) Contacts with Parents; (g) Recurring Problems.

EDUCATION OF SCHOOL STAFF

THE PRE-SCHOOL OPENING WORKSHOP: During the week preceding the opening of school all the key people and a significant sampling of the teachers were assembled for orientation purposes. This workshop provided them with new information, better perspective, an appreciation of the significance of the task, a knowledge of possibilities for pupils, a challenge to contribute to a total enterprise and provided opportunities for team planning.

More workshops during the year, always involving teachers, continued the learning and provided additional opportunities for teacher and administrators to pool experiences and gain assistance in problems being encountered.

SCHOOL CHANGES

It was common knowledge among the teachers that many children in their classrooms, especially the recent in-migrants, were retarded in school, not because of a lack of ability, but more often because they had not been in school regularly in the earlier grades, or they had moved so often and been out of school so much that they just naturally fell behind. These children with normal ability and the maturity which goes with their age should, if given an opportunity, be able to "catch up" with their grade level with a little special assistance. It was the consensus of the teachers that a rigid adherence to the graded system was psychologically unsound in these cases. Consequently, various expedients were adopted. For example, the coaching or remedial teacher was brought into the picture to work with these youngsters individually or in small groups with suitable materials to encourage them to progress rapidly to catch up with their grade group. This applied particularly in the language arts skills and arithmetic. Along with this added service a policy was adopted of moving these individual children along into a higher grade as fast as they could profitably be moved. Such measures required alterations, sometimes quite drastic, in both school organization and curriculum.

THE PRIMARY CYCLE: After considerable study, one of the elementary schools inaugurated a non-graded primary unit, sometimes called a primary cycle. In effect, this is one large block of work which takes the average child 2-1/2 years to finish. Instead of grades, the children were organized into groups according to reading achievement and reading skills. These groupings are called "levels" and a child progresses from one level to the next as rapidly as his ability and achievement indicate he is ready for the activity of the next level. This makes it possible for a child to move through the unit as rapidly as he masters the skills, rather than wait for the progress of the entire group. This plan also makes it possible for the slow starter to take more time to master the skills of a level when his rate of mastery is slower. The average time for completing the unit is 5 semesters or 2-1/2 years. We expect some children to finish in less time and we expect others to need 3 or 4 years.

However, when a child finishes the primary cycle, he will have a good foundation for future school work, and will not have wasted time in repetition which follows when a child fails to be promoted from grade to grade. Under the new plan a child will always start where he leaves off or, in the case of a new enrollee, where we find him, and go forward

as fast as he can master the skills of the level at which he is working. Thus, it will be possible to minimize the disappointment of failure for most children. At the same it will be quite obvious to the child that some are progressing more rapidly than others, but it will be within the normal scheme of things.

In order to put the primary cycle into operation it was necessary to study, classify, and reorganize all of the reading materials which are normally used, and some which were added, in the 2-1/2 years above kindergarten.

SPECIAL MATERIALS: In each of the three schools attempts are being made to bridge the gaps between the vocabulary used inside and outside of school. The two elementary schools are doing this, in part, through extensive use of experience stories. Teachers, with the help of consultants and specialists, are actively preparing their own materials for use with particular groups. One committee has been meeting regularly, with resource help from eminent reading authorities and representatives from the publishing field. Ultimately, this group will produce a series of readers and teachers manuals. The outstanding feature of this reading program is that it is being designed expressly for the culturally deprived child whose meager experiential background makes learning to read a difficult task with the basic readers presently available.

KEEPING TEACHERS WITH THE SAME PUPILS: Another adaptation of the program is the adoption of a practice which keeps the teachers with the same group of children at least through a full year. Under the platoon system in Detroit, it is common practice for teachers to receive a new group of children each semester. Both of the elementary schools involved in the pilot project are experimenting with a plan to have children remain with the same teacher over an extended period of time, perhaps 2 years.

TEAM TEACHING: A great deal of attention has been given to "team teaching" in all three schools. Perhaps a more appropriate term is "cooperative teaching". One aspect of this feature is that the teacher considers other members of the staff as consultants in dealing with individuals and groups. It means that the classroom teacher, when confronted with a problem of any kind has a resource at her beck and call in the form of a visiting teacher who may check on home background, a school-community coordinator who may know the family and be able to give background information about the child or children concerned, and the remedial or coaching teacher who is always available to give special aid to children who need special attention. The cooperative aspect has grown in use throughout the year and has developed several variations in approach.

In the intermediate grades it has become a common practice for teachers who have the same groups of children to confer and plan together so that when a unit is being developed in social studies, for instance, the art teacher will know about it, the music teacher will know about it, the science teacher will know about it, the physical education teacher will know about it, the librarian will know about it, and there will be a general pooling of resources to make that unit enriched and meaningful in the lives of the children. Librarians in both elementary schools report an unprecedented demand for their professional services from their coworkers, the teachers, and from pupils from all grades.

INCREASED USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS: In all three schools there has been a tremendous increase in the use of teaching aids and visual materials. There has been a constant and continuous effort on the part of teachers to find teaching materials which can be adapted to the needs of the children, with vocabulary load and content material suitable for the children concerned. Considerable ingenuity has been developed in the production of materials which supplement that which is normally supplied. The additional clerk-typist in each building has been invaluable in producing teacher-developed supplementary materials.

MEETING PERSONAL NEEDS: As the pilot project has progressed through the year, teachers have discovered anew the rewarding experience of giving children more of the attention and affection that is typically missed in the home life of these children. For example, some teachers make a practice of recognizing children's birthdays, sending them birthday cards through the mail, or have a cake and a little party. This may appear to be a little thing to other people, but it has significant psychological overtones in giving children a sense of identity and recognition and a feeling of individual significance which should be the heritage of every young American.

As a result of teacher study of needs there has been an increased emphasis on dramatization, on judicious repetition, review, and drill, on the use of phonetics in connection with reading and spelling, on unit-planned teaching in the upper grades, on oral communication, on music and literature which has meaning and significance to them, on health habits, and on courtesy and manners in relation to each other and to their elders.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM: In the junior high school, under the leadership of the 6 department heads, there has been intensive study, discussion, and experimentation to enrich and adapt instruction so that it becomes more meaningful and purposeful to the individual student. Particular emphasis has been given to finding means to help students enjoy and experience success in writing compositions of various kinds. Greater attention has been given to the identification of pupils with particular learning problems so that special help may be provided through grouping and through individual assistance.

In the mathematics department of the junior high school there has been much experimentation with newer methods of teaching mathematics. These methods, developed at the University of Illinois and elsewhere, were not designed especially for the teaching of slow or reluctant learners, but considerable success has been realized in adapting these methods for use with such pupils. Ninth grade graduates for the first time will take this kind of training with them into the senior high school, where the same method will be picked up and continued. It is too early to draw any conclusions as to the efficacy of these innovations. Teachers report, however, a very noticeable increase in interest in mathematics and the desire on the part of students to continue into higher branches of mathematics.

During the year, there has been a noticeable increase in the demand for after-school classes. These, of course, are voluntary and may be of a remedial nature or, at the other extreme, for those with special abilities or interests. Among these after-school classes, which have been organized voluntarily, are classes in remedial reading and remedial math, and special ability classes in creative writing, general science, electronics, and two different advanced mathematics groups.

INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN

It is reasonable to expect that activities involving children will vary somewhat according to age and grade level and according to the identified needs of the children concerned. The activities described here, and in other parts of the report, indicate clearly the tremendous possibilities for involving children. As experience with the children and the project increases, other activities will seem to be needed.

FIELD TRIPS: One of the first projects developed cooperately in each of the three schools, under the leadership of the school-community coordinator, was the organization of a program of school trips. This involved taking children from one or two rooms, often in busses, to the community resource which would lend itself to stimulation of interest in something directly related to classroom instruction. In each case careful preparation was made for the trip before the children left the building so they would know what to look for and how to relate it to what they were studying. At all levels such extracurricular experiences were found to provide new information and to stimulate interest. This new knowledge and increased interest manifested itself in more and better written materials, wider reading, and the realization that learn ing could be a pleasurable experience. In many cases, bus service was made available through the Neighborhood Service Organization, through neighboring churches, through the YMCA, and other agencies. In most cases, children were asked to pay a very nominal amount toward the cost of transportation. No child was denied the right to participate because he lacked the fare, but it was discovered early that children took a certain amount of pride in helping to pay their own way. The amount the children paid seldom, if ever, covered the cost. During the second semester, Board of Education funds were made available for bus trips.

COOPERATIVE NURSERY SCHOOL: It was recognized early, of course, that most of these children come to kindergarten with a very sparse background of experience which would enable them to profit by a normal school program -- or at least to the extent which is normally expected in kindergarten. Consequently, after much effort, a cooperative nursery school was set up to serve the 3 and 4-year old children with a more adequate apperceptive background for success in school. No facilities were available outside of the school building and, as a consequence, the nursery school was set up in the kindergarten room after school dismissal time, from 3:30 until 5:00 in the afternoon. This, of course, is the least desirable time for such an activity, but it seemed the best that could be done under the circumstances. Two well-trained persons were employed to work with the children. Special emphasis was given to working with the parents of these young children to help them understand how, even at this early age, the home and the school have complementary roles to play in the education of children. The mothers have been found to be most responsive and appreciative. A nominal charge is made of the parents to help underwrite the cost of the nursery school. Again, the amount collected does not begin to cover the cost of the operation, and the Board of Education underwrites the additional cost.

Other areas in which the children are involved are related to differentiation of instruction, development of a more effective guidance program, and use of the after-school hours to develop a broader base of experience. These considerations are discussed in detail in the section "School Changes", and in "Use of Special Personnel".

USE OF SPECIAL PERSONNEL

A key feature of the program planned for Detroit's role in the project was the provision for each of the pilot schools to have the services of three specialists -- a school-community coordinator, a coaching or remedial teacher and a visiting teacher. The roles of these people and their positions in their respective schools have been quite clearly defined. Many significant developments of the pilot project would have been difficult -- even impossible -- without the help of these additional staff members. Their duties differ from one school to another, depending upon the problems encountered in the various school communities. An understanding of the duties of the school-community coordinator, the visiting teacher, and the coaching teacher will indicate the importance of such personnel.

THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COORDINATOR: Reference has been made previously to the work of the school-community coordinator. This person plays a unique role in bridging the gap between the school and the community. He or she must be adept at working with individual parents, and with the representatives of the various community agencies. A third very important function is that of working with teachers and pupils in fulfilling the need for after-school clubs and activities and in arranging for groups to make trips to such places as the art museum, the historical society, the city-county building, a demonstration farm, or to any other place a teacher may request. This school-community coordinator keeps unusual hours. Since his work may extend after school and into the evening, he may often report at 10:00 or 11:00 o'clock the following morning.

The coordinator has fostered the use of existing community programs and actually promotes some of them -- those of a particularly desirable nature -- by publicizing the programs extensively through the schools. On the other hand, where a need for additional service has been seen, coordinators have often been able to interest agencies in expanding their existing programs and in developing new programs to fill the gaps. Agency groups have been very helpful in providing facilities, co-sponsorships, and leadership for activities developed in the school program. This entire area of contact with the different community agencies and resources has been the province of the school-community coordinator.

THE VISITING TEACHER: The visiting teacher, or school social worker, is particularly concerned with children who show emotional disturbance. Children may be referred to her by any teacher or by the school-community coordinator. Almost invariably the need arises for a visit to the home and may result in many successive visits. Frequently it is found necessary to make referral to agencies which can give more specific and technical assistance.

In making home calls growing out of the non-adjustment of a single child, the school social worker frequently has found that there are other children in the family with similar manifestations. Her work, then, becomes even more significant as she discusses with the parent the solution of some of her problems. As a result of these contacts in the home by visiting teachers and by school-community coordinators, we find parents looking more and more to the school as a place where they can find answers to their problems as parents. They also get a new concept

of how important is the role of parent and home in the proper achievement of children in school. Many times the child's problems in school stem from the total family reaction to urban maladjustment. This is found most frequently in cases of recent inmigration, but the problem also may remain intact in families who have lived in the city for several years but who have not become assimilated.

The school social worker has facilitated her services by arranging for occasional group meetings of teachers who have children from the same family. In some instances, the school visiting teacher may present case studies at the staff meeting. The records she maintains at the school become very helpful in dealing with the children intelligently in the many school situations which arise where children have to be assigned to various groups.

THE COACHING TEACHER: An important part of the coaching teacher's job is remedial work in the language arts, arithmetic and other subject areas. In addition, however, the coaching teacher may be expected to work with children to develop confidence, to motivate and to stimulate, and to meet the tasks they may be expected to face with some degree of success. The coaching teacher may work with individuals or with small groups with similar problems. Occasionally, at the junior high level, some remedial classes of normal size may be assigned to the coaching teacher. It is evident also that the work of the coaching teacher involves guidance and counseling of an elementary nature as well as planning and evaluating achievement. Frequently she finds it necessary to use various kinds of objective achievement tests for evaluating purposes.

The coaching teacher must establish and maintain an excellent working relationship with all teachers so that teachers will feel free to assign children to her as needed and that the coaching teacher will feel free to consult with the regular teachers at all times.

The coaching teacher needs to have a knowledge of teaching materials and methods which are useable at all levels and in all subjects of the school to which he or she is assigned.

It is not intended that the coaching teacher will be loaded with the slow learners who belong in special education classes. Rather, it is the intention of this assignment to work with children of normal ability who are over age for their grade due to the kind of schooling they have been exposed to, or have avoided, before they arrived in this school. The coaching teacher is frequently successful with children who have emotional or psychological blocks which she is able to perceive and overcome with understanding solicitude.

The coaching teacher maintains close relations with the speech correction teacher and others concerned with the physical well-being of the children. The coaching teacher will have a child working with her for a short period of time before he goes back to his classroom. He is never divorced from a classroom as such and only goes to the coaching teacher at periodic intervals throughout the week.

Ideally, the coaching teacher would have a room of her own, but this has not been possible in either of the elementary schools concerned with this project. Consequently, she has had to scrounge around for whatever space happened to be available at that time of day. In spite of this handicap, however, the regular classroom teachers have been loud in their praise of the services provided by the coaching teacher.

INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND PERSONNEL

It was intended at the inception of the project that full use would be made of every available community resource that the city had to offer.

The pilot project was most fortunate to obtain the advice and services of the Cass Community Pilot Project as its advisory counsel. The Cass Community Pilot Project committee is a voluntary coordinating council consisting of representatives from approximately 50 social agencies which function in the area of the three schools in the Great Cities Project. For about five years the Cass Community Pilot Project Committee has met regularly for the purpose of coordinating and integrating the services of their agencies to the best advantage of the community. It functions largely through three subcommittees on recreation, health and casework respectively. The assistance of this group and from the staff of the Neighborhood Service Organization has been particularly helpful.

Some of the group work agencies which have been helpful may be listed. Wayne State University has provided leadership for special-interest groups particularly by assigning 100-hour students -- education students who are required to spend 100 hours working with children -- for experience. The urban 4-H Club Organization has provided training sessions for community leaders and programs for club activity. The Boy Scout Organization and the Girl Scout Organization have provided consultant service for coordinators and training programs for local leaders, while the YMCA has provided bus transportation and program assistance. The YWCA has sponsored special-interest groups, provided leaders, and offered use of facilities and program consultation. The Cass Community Church has provided training for story-hour teachers and has supplied films for the use of clubs. The City Department of Parks and Recreation has added many special activities, provided leaders, and developed special programs within the three schools.

The Traffic Safety Department and the Youth Bureau of the Detroit Police Department has supplied patrolmen at dismissal time as well as speakers for various groups. Consultants for the nursery school program have been provided by Wayne State Nursery School, the Merrill-Palmer School, and the Children's Division of the Wayne County Department of Social Welfare. The United Community Service has provided funds and assisted in finding teachers for the Nursery School. The Michigan State University Extension Service has set up courses in Home Management and

Consumer Education which are geared to the needs of the community. This group has supplied teachers for this service. The Neighborhood Service Organization has provided bus transportation and group leadership. The Urban League has supplied consultant service on Urbanization and Socio-Economic Problems in the Community. The Department of Guidance and Counselling of the Board of Education has sent speakers for club groups. The Mayor's Commission on Children and Youth has provided consultant service and speakers for various groups.

Casework agencies which have provided services to the Pilot Project, generally on referral of the visiting teacher or the school-community coordinator, include the following: Aid to Dependent Children, Children's Aid, Family Service Society, Harper Hospital Social Service, Juvenile Clinic for Child Study, Children's Division of the Michigan State Department of Social Welfare, Case Work Service of the Neighborhood Service Organization, Department of Public Welfare, Social Service Division of Receiving Hospital, Youth Bureau and Women's Division of the Detroit Police Department.

CONTACTS WITH PARENTS

It has been emphasized throughout this report that the cooperation of parents was an ingredient essential for the success of the Great Cities Project in Detroit. Since one of the goals of the project was to help parents and children to raise their levels of aspiration, it was evident that a great deal of planning would be required to insure that any contact with parents, either individually or collectively, would be a rewarding contact. As a result of this careful planning, significant progress was made in changing parental attitudes, and in securing an increased cooperation between parents, teachers, and children. Techniques used to develop this esprit de corps may be described under the headings Meetings, Report Cards, Conferences, Newsletters, and Personal Improvement Classes.

MEETINGS: All three of the schools in the pilot project had been holding parent-teacher meetings -- with varying degress of participation-- for many years. However, with involvement in the project, each of the schools felt it was important to let parents and community know what was happening in the schools. Whenever a change was about to be made, parents were informed before it became effective. Often, they had been a part of the planning group that helped to develop the adaptations in school organization and school planning.

Great emphasis was placed on the monthly parent-teacher meetings. Be cause school problems were frankly discussed, together with the opportunities the project offered to solve the problems, word soon went through the parent group that if one stayed away from the meetings, he was quite apt to miss an important discussion which affected his child. In short, if you didn't go to the meeting, you didn't know what was going on at school. Interestingly enough, many parents began to look

upon these monthly get-togethers as an evening of sociability as well as self-improvement. This was an opportunity to visit with neighbors, discuss school problems with one another, and enjoy such pleasures as fashion shows, movies, dancing, and refreshments. These meetings have helped to make the school program more effective. Until now, teachers seldom received the reinforcement of their work from parents and the community because neither the parents nor the community knew what the school was trying to do, or how to work with the school staff. Needless to say, teachers benefited from these contacts too.

REPORT CARDS: The use of report cards has been a traditional device for keeping parents informed of pupil progress. The pilot schools soon found the need to supplement these matter-of-fact reports with notes and letters from the teachers. This technique has received hearty approval from the parents for, as they say, they understand better what the strengths and weaknesses of their children are. One of the elementary schools, in conjunction with its primary cycle, has designed a completely new report card. Along with the usual spaces for academic achievement, such items as the factors of social emotional, and mental maturity are discussed.

CONFERENCES: The pilot schools have made it clear to parents that the school is always open to them. Yet, it was deemed necessary to plan specific conferences for individual parents and for different groups. Conferences have been of five types: (1) large group conferences to explain to the parents the objectives and operation of new school programs; (2) room conferences in which the teacher explained the objectives of the room, and how parents could help the child at home to do better work in school; (3) individual conferences with parents, to explain how the parent could help the child avoid failure; (4) individual conferences by special subject teachers for parents of children of special ability, helping the parents understand that the child had unusual ability and should be encouraged to finish school; and (5) individual conferences for parents of children who show problem behavior patterns.

NEWSLETTERS: Effective use has been made of regularly issued newsletters to parents. These releases have been helpful in announcing meetings, in explaining special programs and classes, and in reporting events of special community interest. An important feature has been the inclusion of a "Calendar of Events".

PERSONAL IMPROVEMENT CLASS: Reference has been made elsewhere to the varied after-school program being offered to children and adults by the pilot schools. A schedule of 30 different activities each week is not unusual. Much of this is adult education at a very elementary level. It began on a relatively small scale and grew in relation to its own success. In this phase an attempt is being made to retrieve one generation in order to salvage the next one. Classes for parents without charge have included such subjects as typing, sewing, child care, milinery, homemaking, and understanding adolescent problems.

RECURRING PROBLEMS

As in any undertaking of the magnitude of the Great Cities Project, difficulties are bound to arise. In our case, most were minor and could be resolved almost at once. However, some problems have tended to recur throughout the year. Solution for some will be difficult if not impossible. A few of these major problems are cited briefly.

ORIENTATION OF TEACHERS: Teachers and other school staff have to devote added time to their school work in this program. Frequent workshops and meetings are required for a well-informed staff. Ideally, every teacher should have been involved in the preliminary planning sessions. While teachers have been generous about giving freely of their time, it is difficult to assemble whole school staffs at a place and time after school that is convenient to resource people and consultants. Vacation and Saturdays are needed in part and teachers should be compensated, at least partially. Budget limitations have prevented this. Having a staff that is adequately informed of every phase of the project is a goal that must be reached.

LACK OF LOCAL LAY LEADERSHIP: Until now, much of the activity has been supervised by professional personnel. It would be desirable to replace such people with persons from the neighborhood or school community. It is the aim to develop this lay leadership. However, adults in these neighborhoods tend to be unskilled in group processes and are apprehensive about group participation. They are frequently sensitive about their apparel, speech, and lack of education. Indigenous leadership is rarely present but the potential exists and is amenable to encouragement and stimulation. The important thing is to help these parents realize the importance of the home in support of school, in relationships with pupils, and the significance of parent-child relationship as it bears upon the education of the child and his growth and development toward maturity as an individual.

TRANSIENCY: As was previously pointed out, the community in which the pilot schools are located is noted for its excessive transiency. This fact has made operation of the program an extremely difficult and involved task. This was especially true in one of the elementary schools.

MULTIPLICITY OF AGENCIES: The extreme number of social service agencies and civic organizations has been almost as bewildering to personnel in the project as it has frequently been to so many lay citizens. Always there is the problem of finding exactly the right contact for a particular referral or consultation service. Many service groups appear to have overlapping functions and often, differing requirements for their services. This has frequently taxed even the skills of the school-community coordinator and the school social worker. Agency personnel seem to watch over their little provinces of operation most carefully. Because of this, there is always the possibility of offending. Since all of these services have merit, dealing with the various groups has been a real problem.

TESTS: It has been impossible to measure objectively the effect to date of what is being done in the pilot schools. Resources have not been provided to attempt to measure the intangibles with which this project is concerned. Insufficient funds and personnel have been devoted to adequately measure academic achievement and progress. Growth in maturity, change in attitude, and better self-concepts need to be measured on a school-wide basis. Subjective interpretations are scarcely valid.

RECORDS: As in the situation with tests, there is a serious shortcoming. What records should be kept? How reasonable is it to use teacher time in maintaining elaborate sets of records? What kind of information should be noted? How must such records be interpreted? These are some of the questions which have presented problems in this area. There are still no answers.

EVALUATION: Problems of evaluation are closely related to the difficulties described in the areas of testing and record keeping. It is important to develop procedures to determine how the project can be evaluated in light of accomplishments? A committee has spent a great deal of time working on this problem. It is a long way from a satisfactory answer.

SUMMARY

Detroit's participation in this portion of the Great Cities School Improvement Program has been an attempt on the part of three pilot schools -- two elementary schools, one junior high school -- to develop a program especially suited to improve the teaching of children who come from homes of limited background. In most cases, these families are recent in-migrants, both white and Negro, or families who have failed in attempts as assimilation into a dynamic, industrial, urban culture. It has concentrated on education of the teachers to understand better the pupils, parents and community so that teaching and the school could be made more effective.

With a minimum of additional school personnel, and a minimum increase in school budget -- 10% per pupil costs over what is spent in other areas of the city is the goal -- the following objectives were set for teachers and other school staff members:

1. Identify better each child's abilities, interests, and needs.
2. Stimulate each child to attain achievement levels commensurate with his abilities.
3. Raise each child's cultural sights by providing enrichment experiences.
4. Assist each child in making and carrying out appropriate educational and occupational plans.

5. Assist parents in providing a home atmosphere of encouragement and stimulation.

6. Give parents a better understanding of educational opportunities available to them and to their children.

7. Enlist the assistance of community agencies in supplying necessary services and expanding cultural experiences for each child.

8. Encourage the community to accept the worthwhileness of higher cultural levels and the fact that each child should be educated to his optimum potential.

Such a program has required the close cooperation of school personnel, parents, community leaders, and social service agencies. The schools have attempted to improve instruction for the culturally deprived child by changes in teaching, including changes in school organization, curriculum, teaching techniques, and materials. Parents have been kept informed of each change, together with its purpose, and agencies have been enthusiastic in their support of the activities of the pilot schools. They have shown a remarkable interest in meeting the requests and demands made upon them as a result of this project.

As smoothly and successfully as the program appears to be progressing, there are problems that have yet to be resolved. These problems are concerned with teacher orientation, dearth of lay leadership, transiency of the population, multiplicity of agencies, and evaluation.

This pilot study is designed to find out if instruction for pupils from limited backgrounds can be significantly improved at a relatively insignificant cost providing an entire school staff is willing to make whatever changes may be called for in a particular school situation, and to use its facilities and abilities creatively and imaginatively.